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Mr. DORRINGTON's
SERMON
ON
PLAY.

W. DORRINGTON

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THE
REGULATIONS
OF
PLAY

Propos'd and Recommended :

IN A
SERMON

PREACHED at the
Chapel of *Tunbridge-Wells*,
August the 19th, 1706.

BY
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Rector of *Wittresham* in *Kent*.

L O N D O N :

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PROV. x. 23.

*It is as a Sport to a Fool to do Mischief:
but a Man of Understanding bath
Wisdom.*

THE Spirit of God in this place of Scripture condemns as foolish the making any thing that is sinful the Matter or Object of our Sport and Recreation. The Sense of the Text seems fully and very fitly express'd in this Paraphrase ;

“ A senceless Sinner makes a Jest of the most horrid Impieties that can be committed by himself or others: But a Man that weighs things wisely considers that 'tis no laughing Matter, and takes that Pleasure in doing well, which Fools do in mischievous Wickedness. (Bp. Patr.)

The Condemning of this thing in general, The taking pleasure and delight in what is wicked, and making what is so the Matter or Object of our Sport and Entertainment, may be judg'd also to include and condemn the Abuse of Sport and Recreation, which in it self is lawful, and the using this with

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such Disorder as is sinful; For in both these Cases there is the Folly of taking Pleasure in what is sinful, and of being guilty for the sake of the Pleasure and Entertainment which Men find in what they do.

This Text of Holy Scripture, then, is a proper Foundation for a Discourse that would be useful towards curing this too common Folly of Mankind, The committing Wickedness in their Sports and Recreations: And with such I crave leave to entertain you a little while.

I desire that we may observe in the first place in General what is meant by Recreation, and what is allow'd and lawful in it. And we may observe that by Recreation is meant such Action and Exercise of Body or Mind as is pleasant, and is perform'd with ease, and does refresh the Powers and Faculties of both, and renders *them* the more fit for their several Functions and Operations, and *us* for the Duties which are requir'd of us. This is a true Recreation, and a Lawful and Innocent one; and is allow'd by the Kind Author of our Being: Who made us to make us happy, and takes Pleasure in our Happiness; and therefore allows us the necessary Refreshment, the Ease and Pleasure of our several Faculties and Powers. But under the Name of Recreations, and as such, the Weakness and Folly of Humane Nature is often drawn into Sin: And these, being in their Nature pleasing Actions, are very apt Instruments and Means for that purpose. Therefore our Adversary the Devil commonly laies Snares for us in the Use of these. So that even in the Relaxation

laxation of other Cares we are still so unhappy as to need our Application to this, that we do not sin against God, and wound and hurt our selves by what we do herein.

Let us observe in the next place, when or wherein a Man must be accounted to transgress in the Use of Recreations: Which we must know may be done both in the Matter and in the Manner of what he uses as such. He may make his Recreation and Entertainment of that which is in it self sinful, and he may transgress in the Manner and Circumstances of using such as, for the Matter, is allow'd and lawful.

This whole Matter will be best represented by Particulars under these Two Heads. And, to make known the first part, it must be said, A Man sins in making his Recreation and Entertainment that which is in it self sinful, when he entertains and pleases himself with any thing in himself or others that is profane, and contradicts the due Honour and Reverence of Almighty God: Or with any thing that is wrongful and injurious to his Neighbour, and contradicts the Obligations of Justice: Or with any thing which in the Action it self contradicts Charity and Mercy, and is a Cruelty to Man or Beast. Now whatever is of this sort being obvious and manifest to any Man that considers what he pleases himself with, I shall not stay to speak more particularly of the Transgressions which come under this Head.

But I shall proceed to observe and represent more particularly under the Second Head, How Men may sin in the Manner and Circumstances of their Re-

creation: In the abusing of such as in the Matter of it is lawful and innocent. And because the most of our Transgressions in Recreation lie under this Head, after I have represented the Instances of them, I shall propose the proper Rules to be observ'd in Recreations, by which Men may avoid such Transgressions; And then I shall offer some Reason for the observing of such Rules, and for the avoiding all Transgression as much as is possible herein.

To begin with the first of these Proposals, It may be represented, that in the following Instances, Men do abuse their Recreations, and transgress in the Manner of using them;

1. *When any of these are made use of meerly to pass away and spend the Time which we might otherwise usefully employ.* We have our Time given us by the Author of our Being for some End and Use: And we ought to use it as well as we can in some Service and Acknowledgement of him; or doing some Good and Benefit to our Neighbour; or in preparing and qualifying our selves for so doing; that we may be able to render a good Account of this to him that has lent it to us. We cannot without Guilt squander and trifle away any part of this which might be well employ'd and us'd. And 'tis unreasonable that we who have so little Time to live, and whose Lives are so uncertain, and who have so much Work to do for God, for our Neighbour, and our own selves, should ever think we have any Time to spare, that we may throw away and spend to no purpose. We have little reason to contrive Means to drive that away, which flies fast enough of it self, which is continually going and wasting;

ing ; and is not likely to lie much of it upon our Hands ; and when 'tis once gone cannot in the least Minute of it be recover'd. This is contrary to that Command and Direction of Holy Scripture, *Walk circumspectly, not as Fools but as Wise, redeeming the Time.* Which pronounces it Foolish and contrary to Wisdom, not to make the best Use we can of so valuable a Thing.

2. They transgress in the Manner and Circumstance of their Recreations *who suffer these to divert or detain them from necessary Duty* : Who follow them unseasonably, and for the sake of them, neglect what Service of God or Man they are at any time call'd to. Young Persons transgress in this matter if they for the sake of Pleasure and Recreation do neglect to improve and accomplish themselves in the best manner they can, and to learn what may render them serviceable to God and the World. And any others transgress in it who spend their time beyond necessity in Recreation which should be spent in the Work and Business which the Providence of God has given them to attend and do. They transgress in their Recreations who suffer these to trespass upon their Devotions, and the Worship of God, to hinder them from private Worship or that in publick, when they are call'd to it : Who spend the Night in Play, and are thereby unfit for any Work or Service of God or Man the next Day. And certainly it must be said that they who will not allow any part of a Day from their Recreations for publick Worship, which is appointed for the Religious Commemoration of our Blessed Saviour, and what he has done for us, and of the holy and useful Lives of the Apostles, when they are call'd to Publick Worship on
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those Days, do transgress in their Recreations, and use them out of due Season.

3. And then much rather must it be an Abuse of these, *to be entirely, or almost only given up to, and engag'd in Recreation.* Some Mens Lives, because the Necessity of their Fortune has not oblig'd them to Business, are in a manner one continued Recreation. Or if they mingle this at all with a little Business, that Business is what they do on the By, and Pleasure and Recreation is their most constant Employment. But this we must know is not to be chiefly minded and followed, nor may be staid upon as the main Business of Life. The Holy Scripture speaks of such who Live in Pleasure, as Dead while they Live, (1 Tim. 5. 6.) They are such who apply themselves chiefly and for the most part to this : and are as useless, and by consequence as worthless, as dead Persons. Our Recreations are not to have the greatest share of our Time, nor indeed an equal one with the Service of God and of Mankind. On the contrary, they ought to have no more than what is necessary for our Relief and Refreshment after Labour and Care, or to quicken and fit us for what we have to do.

4. Men abuse their Recreations and use them unlawfully, *when they use and follow them meerly for the Pleasure and Entertainment which they find in them.* These are unduly esteem'd when they are valued for themselves, and therefore must be unduly used when this is done for the sake of the Pleasure which they afford. To do thus is direct Contradiction to the Apostle's Rule, *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* Let the Honour and Acknowledgment of him, be
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your End and Direction in all you do ; 'tis to direct such Actions entirely to the gratification and pleasing of our selves, and to make our selves, as it were, our own Gods. As they who mind only the Pleasure and Gratification of their Appetite in eating and drinking are said to *make their Belly their God*. He who uses his Recreations meerly for the Pleasure he takes in them cannot be without an inordinate Love to them, and will be too much addicted to them, and must be drawn thereby into other Abuses of them. He will often needlessly and unseasonably use them, will be detain'd and diverted from his Duty for the sake of them: And his Mind and Thoughts will when he is about his Work and Duty be so diverted as to hinder his due Application to it, and so to prejudice and weaken his Performanoe.

5. Our Sports and Recreations are abused, and we Sin in them, *when they are undertaken and used for gain by them*. This proceeds from coveting and desiring another Man's Goods after an unlawful manner: From desiring to have what is his without a valuable Consideration, and giving him in any Measure the Worth of it, either in it self or to him. 'Tis an inordinate desire of Gain, and belongs to the Vice of Covetousness; and what is thus gotten comes by a sort of Theft. And as an Aggravation of such Theft, a good and learned Man (*Downham*) says of it, *Other Thieves rob Strangers, but the Gamester robs his Friend*. Besides, A Man that has this End in his Recreations and Play, and allows a greedy Desire of getting to mingle with it, He is under strong Temptation to cheat his Neighbour in his Play if he can: And then he certainly abuses it. He will hardly resist the Temptation when an Op-
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tunity is offered, and will be apt to seek and lie in wait for such Opportunity. And these Things it is not doubted, do commonly belong to those especially who live, and maintain themselves by Play. What the Apostle directs, (*Eph. 4. 28.*) seems to condemn, by consequence at least, the proposing and applying ones self to gain by Play, tho' it were to provide for our selves and Dependants: Where he orders that those who need to do any thing to provide for themselves do *labour, working with their Hands the thing that is good.* They ought to be engaged in some Honest and Useful Employment, in something which has good Effect and is Beneficial to Mankind. If this be a Rule of Christian Religion, none may propose to maintain themselves by Recreation and Play; which is an Exercise or Employment of no Use or good Effect, any further than as it fits us for useful Work and Business.

6. And they transgress in their Recreations and abuse them, *who allow too much Expence upon them.* These are excessive costly when they waste and diminish the Estate: When they take away from the due and necessary Provision for those who depend upon us: When they hinder a Man from laying up against a time of extraordinary Exigence and Occasion for Expence: When they disable him for Exercises of Charity to the Poor: When they force him to borrow and run in Debt to his Neighbour to maintain them, and hinder him from paying again. *He that provides not for his own, the Apostle says, has denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.* And 'tis given as the Character of a wicked Person, That he *borrow and pays not again.* And if the Relief of the
 Poor

Poor be so much a common Duty, that even he who Labours for his own Maintenance and Provision, ought to endeavour to be able, and then to afford somewhat towards the Relief of the Poor, according to the Apostle's Rule. (*Eph. 4. 28.*) Then much rather ought they whom the Providence of God has well provided for, and has inabled them for such Exercise, to husband their Portion so as to keep themselves able and ready for this: And they are very Guilty if they disable themselves for it by needless Play and Recreation. It ought to be but a small Proportion that Men allow themselves to spend upon this.

Lastly. It is an Abuse of Recreation and Play, when *Man fall into inordinate Passions, and any sinful Expressions of them thereby*: When a Man is led by it into any Profaneness against God, or Uncharitableness to his Neighbour. He is too much concern'd in his Play, and abuses it, who falls into a Rage at any ill Success, and Curses and Blasphemes God and his Providence, tho' under the Name of Fortune, for it: And he who falls into Quarrels and Contentions with his Companions, and much more if these Quarrels settle into lasting Animosities, and Ill-will to each other. These are Effects which commonly come to pass by the Errour and Folly of venturing too much at Play, and losing too much by it. This should always be so manag'd, if a Man would be Wise and Innocent, as that he may be easy under what he loses and spends in his Play. Recreation should be easy and pleasing to the Body and Mind, but in this case 'tis uneasy and hurtful to both; And instead of fitting Men for their Duties, it unfits them

certainly both for the Duties of Piety towards God, and for all the Offices of Charity towards their Neighbour.

Thus I have represented the several Ways in which Men may transgress in the Manner and Circumstances of their Recreation or Play : And in which 'tis to be fear'd many do so. And therefore it is necessary, and may be useful, to offer some Rules by which if Men will propose to themselves to use their Recreations innocently and wisely, they may be directed, and by the Blessing of God be enabled to avoid the common Transgressions of careless and inconsiderate People herein. And they are such as follow :

1. *We must propose to our selves a right and proper End in the Use of these, whenever we apply our selves to them ; and must take care to be as mindful of that as we can, during our use of them. The right End and Purpose of Recreation is to please and refresh the Powers of Body and Mind, to renew their Strength, and excite their Activity, in order to improve their Performance, and to fit us the better for continuing our Course of Duty to God and Man. We must not thus intermit or cease the Work and Business of Life, but for the sake of doing it the better when we return to it again, or that we may the more surely persevere in it. If this End be always proposed and minded we shall not use these meerly to pass away the Time, or for the Pleasure we find in them, or for Gain by them, nor shall we tire our selves, or become the more unfit for our Business and Duty by the Use of them, and we shall not*
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squander and lose, but make a good Use even of that Time which is bestow'd on them.

2. *Men should chuse for their Recreations ordinarily, and as far as they can, such as are fittest for themselves to serve the right and due End of using them.* In this there is Occasion for Prudence and Discretion : We must not run upon any Inconsiderately as they offer themselves, or as blind Inclination may suggest, but apply to them with Choice and Consideration of what is fittest for us ; As certainly it becomes reasonable Creatures to do all Things with Reason. Some Sorts of these are fitter for some Persons, and some for others. The Recreations of him who has Labour of Body for his chief Business should rather be easy to his Body than lab'drious ; such were not a good Refreshment to the Powers of the Body, but would rather tire them more. He whose Business lies chiefly in Thought, and Study, and Labour of the Mind, must not chuse such Recreations as much engage and exercise the Thought and Mind. The labouring Man should rest his Body, and please his Mind in chearful Conversation, Reading, Meditation, and Devotion : The studious Person, and such as are obliged to much Thought and Care, as are those especially who have the Trouble of Governing so unweildy Things as Mankind are, should relax their Care and Study, and exercise the Body and Mind in some easy and pleasing Employment : And, if I may say what I imagine in the Case, there seems to me nothing so fit to ease and sooth the Minds of such, as Musick with Devotion, which certainly raises none but easy and pleasing Motions in those that use it. This we may believe was a ve-

ry frequent Entertainment and Diversion to the excellent *David*, whose Care in Government, and Valour and Conduct in War, raised his People to their greatest Height of Glory and Felicity.

3. He that would be Wise and Innocent in his Recreations, *should, as much as he may, make one Part of the Business and Duty of his Life a Recreation and Diversion to another.* This were a sure Way to prevent the spending too much Time in meer Diversion, and the being detained or diverted at any time from necessary Duty. We may do this, I believe, for the most Part; and thus we may refresh our selves as far as is necessary, and yet keep the Business of Life still going on too. One while a Man may be employ'd in Worship and Devotion, and this may be a sufficient and most pleasing Diversion from Worldly Business. At other times Worldly Business may be a good Diversion from Worship and Devotion. At one time we may be seeking Divine Knowledge, and improving our selves in Vertue and Religion, and entertaining our selves with the mighty Pleasure of this; At another time we may in some Worldly Business be managing our Portion to the best Advantage, and seeking in Honest Ways to increase and improve it for good and religious Ends. At another time we may be doing Offices of Kindness to a Neighbour, visiting the Sick, comforting the Sad and Afflicted, directing those who are in Errour, relieving such as are in Want. Most Mens Worldly Business has such Variety in it, as that one part may be a Diversion to another. As Harvest and gathering of Fruits is to preparing the Ground for Seed, and Sowing, Planting, Pruning,
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and the like : As Buying is to Selling, and Business Abroad, to Business at Home. So much there is of this, that a Wise Man might find very little need of other Recreations, or such as should wholly divert him for any long Time from his Work and Duty.

4. It must be observ'd, at least for the avoiding Transgression in what is Lawful and Innocent in Recreation and Play, *That Men do avoid the Games and Plays that depend entirely upon Chance or Hazard.* These many Divines do think to be unlawful in themselves. But thus much may certainly be said concerning them, That if they are not unlawful in themselves, they should be avoided, or but sparingly used by him who would be innocent, and never when any other can be had to serve the turn of necessary and sufficient Recreation without them. Because these Games are peculiarly apt to draw Men into many Transgressions in the Use of them. They are very apt to engage those who use them in an Extravagant Expence and Cost upon their Play. It is Wisely said by one of our Divines, that Games which are only depending upon Chance or Hazard, and are not, nor can be managed to Advantage by the Skill of the Players, are the most dangerous in this Respect; For (says he) In other Games, which stand most upon Skill and Cunning, Men being beaten are willing to give over with little Loss, when they find themselves therein far inferiour to those who Play with them. But in those Games which depend upon Chance, one Man will hope to have as good Luck as another, and thus their Losses are apt to draw Men on further, and further, till they go too far in Expence

pence upon their Play, out of an Expectation of changing at length their Chance, and recovering their Losses. And thus as these Games do often spend too much of their Money, they also by the same Way spend too much of their Time; and they lose much of that while they sit to recover their other Loss. It is in these Games too that Men are especially liable to be transported into an Impious and Blasphemous Impatience against God himself, if they have ill Success: They grow angry at this, and perhaps think they have no one to blame for it but him. Or else they quarrel with one another upon Suspicion of unfair Play; which the Loser will be very liable to, while there is nothing else but meer Chance to give his Companion advantage over him: And this he will think his Companion can hardly have continually, or for a long Time, by meer Chance and without unfair Play.

These Games do peculiarly gratify and cherish the Vice of Idleness, which is commonly as averse to, as unfit for any Actions or Employments that are of Use to the World, or Profitable and Honourable to a Man's self. In these there is nothing necessary to be learnt for the Advantageous Management of them, and therefore they agree well with those who care not to learn any thing, and suit even such as cannot endure so much Industry and Labour as to learn but to Play: And as these Persons have some Entertainment in such Plays, they gratify, and cherish, and maintain that idle and worthless Disposition, and serve to keep those who follow them good for nothing; As People com-

commonly are in a full Proportion as they are addicted and apply'd to these most idle Games and Plays. Such must live in Pleasure, for they are not qualified, nor fit for, nor capable of any thing else.

5. To avoid Transgression in this Matter, *Men must be very careful in the Choice of those who are their Companions in Recreation and Diversion.* They must Associate as much as is possible with those who are Diligent in Business, and are Religious and Regular, rather than with those who are Idle, Irregular and Vicious. It is good for young Persons especially, to accompany, if they can, those who are elder than themselves, and whom they have some Reverence and Respect for. They who are apt to fall into Disorder, and are commonly irregular, are dangerous Companions to others, and will be very likely to draw those that accompany them, by Degrees at least, into the same Disorders. Those are especially to be avoided, as the most dangerous Companions of all in Recreation, who make this as it were their Trade and Business of Life; or such as seek by this Way to repair the Wasts which their Prodigal Vices have made in their Fortunes. Such are commonly many other Ways besides irregular in Play; And 'tis scarce possible for any others to take them often for their Companions in it, without being often drawn into the several Instances of the foolish and guilty Abuse of it that have been mention'd. Whoever therefore would most surely avoid these Abuses, he must most carefully avoid and shun such Companions in his Play.

Lastly,

Lastly, However it may sound oddly to the People of Play, to whose Childish Humour every thing serious seems ridiculous, yet 'tis a very good and fitting Rule, to begin our Recreations with some short Address in our Minds to Almighty God ; to desire that we may be under the Direction of his good Spirit in the use of them, and may receive Benefit, and no Harm by them. 'Tis certainly very proper that a reasonable Creature should act always with Reason, and that a religious Person should be always religious ; That he begin even his Recreations with an Act of Religion, as he must, if he will agree with himself, be guided by Religion in them. And they who go to their Meals with an Act of Religion and Acknowledgment of God, as all that ever pretended to Religion, whether among Heathens or Christians, ever did, cannot think it incongruous to begin even their Recreations so. But they who neglect the former, may think it uncouth to do the latter. Let us then, if we can think Religion an Ornament of the Humane Nature, and that it becomes us to excel the Beasts, when we apply to our Recreations say to God, *Hallowed be thy Name ; Or, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven ; Or, Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* When we thus begin our Recreations with a Fear of God, and a Concern to glorify and acknowledge him in them, and to avoid Offence and Transgression, we are in a good Disposition to use them innocently and wisely. It is in its own Nature a fit course to keep us right ; and besides, it engages, as we may say, the Spirit of God to assist us with his Grace : That Grace which must enable us to withstand the Temptations of the World, the
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Flesh, and the Devil. These Temptations do every where beset us, and this Grace of God will not be wanting to those who earnestly and sincerely seek and desire it; as our Saviour has assur'd us in saying, *He giveth the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

Now if Men would govern themselves by such Rules as these in their Recreation and Pleasure they might be innocent in it; And there is certainly very good Reason for this.

I come then to the Third Head of Discourse proposed, which is *to offer some good Reasons for the Observance of such Rules, and for the taking care to avoid, if we can, all Transgression in our Play.* I shall observe, that if there is truly good Reason for this, Men must be govern'd by it. This becomes us, as reasonable Creatures, in all things to act agreeably with the Dictates of right Reason; and it is necessary to our Happiness. What does not agree with Reason does not agree with our Nature, and that cannot be good for us. And such is our Nature, that, if Reason does not direct and govern us, it will have its times to upbraid and condemn us, and be very uneasy and troublesome. Let right Reason then in this Case be heard, and it will tell Men,

That to govern themselves by such Rules in their Recreation as have been propos'd, and to avoid as much as may be all Irregularity and Transgression in it, is *absolutely necessary and conducing to the true Pleasure and Benefit of it.* In this way Men will have the best Enjoyment of their Recreations, they will

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be most pleasing to them : And in this way these will be most Profitable ; they will do Men some Good and no Harm. This may be very manifest upon a little Consideration, even before Trial, but would be best proved by Trial and Experience. It is evident, that he who makes Recreation and Pleasure his Business, and gives himself up wholly to it, cannot have it so pleasant to him, as a Man that makes it but his Diversion from Business and Duty . He who sparingly uses it, and as just Occasion requires, comes to it as a weary Man to his Rest, as one that is thirsty to his Drink, or an hungry Man to his Meal ; in which Cases these Things afford the greatest Pleasure and Delight. What we want is most pleasant to us when we obtain and enjoy it ; And therefore the sparing use of Recreation, and as there is Occasion for it, heightens the Relish, and improves the Pleasure of this. 'Tis evident also, that he who hurts himself in his Health, his Estate, or Reputation by his Play lessens the Pleasure of it ; but the Observance of good Rules in it avoids all this.

In the Regular and Just Use of Recreations too it is alone that we can derive the Benefit and Profit from them which they are able to afford. Thus they will serve most effectually the End which they are to be used for, and will do us good. They will please the Faculties and Powers of the Body and Mind, and renew their Strength, and improve their Vigour. And so being regular in these, we may be getting some Good, even by the Intermission of our Work and Duty : We may promote the main Business of Life in some Measure while 'tis thus interrupted ; Because we shall go to this, again in due time and with more
Strength

Strength and Spirit, and shall do it the better for such Intermissions.

Reason again if consulted will tell us, to persuade the just and regular Use of our Recreations, *That 'tis extreamly base and disingenuous willingly to offend God for meer Sport and Recreation*, 'tis an Instance of the vilest Ingratitude and Injustice: The Goodness of God is gentle and easy in all his Commands, requires nothing of us but what is adequate and agreeable to the Powers of our Nature, allows us necessary Ease and Recreation to make our Work and Duty the more pleasant to us. Is it not then a base Ingratitude to Abuse his Goodness, and offend him in our Recreations? He is just to our Nature and Powers in this Allowance, as well as kind; but we are unjust to him if for the sake of these, we neglect and forsake our Duty. This is to offend him where the Temptation is small; where there is no Plea of Necessity; For there is no Necessity of any thing of this sort so far as it is Irregular and Sinful. This is to be ungrateful and unjust to him, without any real Advantage and Benefit to our selves; For these Things, so far as they are irregular, are of no Use and of no Advantage to us. And this is evidently very mean and fordid thus to behave our selves towards God. To be insensible of great Kindness and Obligations must dishonour and disparage any Man whatever; to level himself not only with the basest of Men, but even with the worst of Beasts. 'Tis to be worse than some of these, as is intimated in that Expression of the Prophet, (Isa. 1. 3.) *The Ox knows his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib.* The Dog and the Horse, which are sometimes the Instruments of such Mens

Recreation and Pleasure, being consider'd, would be observed to upbraid and condemn their Masters Disingenuity and Ingratitude towards Almighty God, and their shameful Unsensibleness of his great Goodness and Obligations.

Reason also requires that Men consider and regard in this Case *the short continuance of the Pleasure of irregular Recreations especially, and the terrible and lasting ill Consequences and Effects which attend the Sin of them.* The Pleasures of Sin are but for a Season, they are alas very short. He that uses his Recreations longer than just Occasion requires, uses it longer than 'tis truly Pleasant. He that is not Careful and Wise in the Choice of his Recreations, will at a venture take those that are least fit for him, and by consequence those which cannot long entertain and please him. Our Faculties and Powers are soon tired even with these Things if we let our selves loose to them without Bounds ; and when once they are tired by them, we are no longer pleased or entertain'd. And when they are at an end by meer Necessity, as they must be in a little Time, if they come off with a Sting, and are attended with Remorse, and Rebuke of Conscience, all the Pleasure and Taste of them is utterly gone, and they leave a very bitter and distastful Farewell ; and this must attend the Irregular Use of them.

But the ill Consequences and Effects of these are very terrible and lasting ; suppose they leave a decay'd Body, impair'd and sickly by Intemperance and Excess of Pleasure : Suppose they exhaust the Estate, and bring a Man to Indigence and Poverty,

ty, and to mean and pitiful Shifts to support his Title and Quality ; or that his Title and Quality cannot defend him from Contempt when the Estate, which adorn'd it in the Eyes of Men, is lost, and the worthless Thing has no Vertues, no Accomplishments to adorn it, no excellent Qualifications, by which he might be capable of Offices of Honour and Profit, to repair the Waits of his Folly, he having spent his Time of Improvement in Idleness and Play. Suppose the Irregularities of Play have taken away from him that must maintain or make his Fortune by Trade, all his Stock of Money and Credit. These are all Natural and Ordinary Consequences and Effects of Irregular Recreations ; but are Consequences which the Short-liv'd, Poor and Needless Entertainment of Pleasure is by no means an equal Compensation for.

But besides these there is Guilt contracted hereby, Guilt that sticks fast to the Soul, and is a very terrible Pain : That forfeits the Favour of God, and all Hopes of Happiness to come : That makes every Burden and Affliction which invades us in this Life much the more grievous and afflicting. And Habits of Vice are contracted too, and by these a Man is enslaved to the Devil, his mortal Enemy, who will lead him captive to his Perdition. So this short Amusement, vain and empty of Good, and very little pleasant, procures the eternal Loss of all Joy and Happiness, and the enduring of Woe and Sorrow without end.

To persuade Men not to omit or neglect their Duty for the sake of Pleasure and Recreation Reason suggests,

gests, *That to be steady and diligent in our Duty will render that much the more easy and pleasant to us; when frequent and long Interruptions will make it difficult and less pleasant.* And this is a very just Argument why Men should not give themselves much to Recreation and Pleasure, or oftner and longer interrupt their Duty for it, than just Occasion requires. Necessary Duty must be done, or the Consequences of the Neglect must be miserable and fatal. And what must be done, 'tis our Wisdom and Interest to make as familiar, and easy, and pleasant to our selves as we can.

But there is nothing that can conduce more to this than to be very Steady and Diligent in it. Therefore 'tis great Folly, and must be unhappy to any Man, to break off his Duty and Work for the sake of Pleasure and Recreation, needlessly or unseasonably, or for too long Spaces of Time; because this will render any one the less disposed and the less able to perform his Duty, and make this, which might be Easy and Pleasant, but an ungrateful Drudgery. He who follows his Pleasure and Recreation inordinately makes but a Drudgery of that; and when he accounts his Duty a Drudgery too, that Man can have but an unpleasant Life. When he who uses his Recreations Wisely and Soberly, and according to Rule and Reason, has not only a full Delight in them, but is so accusom'd to his Duty that he can Delight in that too; and between just Recreation and Business has the most Pleasant Life that can be. He has the more Pleasure in both for his due Application to his Work and Duty, and for

for his just and temperate Use of Recreation and Pleasure.

Lastly, It is well worth Considering in the Case too, and to with-hold Men from the Abuses of Recreation, *That our Labour in Religion and Duty will be but short, and the Advantages and Rewards of this will be eternal.* This Life is very short, and is always hastening to an End; And then 'tis always advancing us towards our Rest and Reward. If we can but be contented not to take too much ease now, we shall ere long have our fill of Ease and Pleasure. We may take of this at present what is necessary and convenient and will be useful to us, and why should any Man forfeit and despise his eternal Rest and Reward for more than that.

As every Man shall be rewarded according to that he hath done in the Flesh, we may expect to be in due and just Proportion rewarded; And for more Diligence and Work to have the more Honour and Reward. It may be certainly expected that none of our Labour shall be in Vain or without Advantage: That we shall not repent any Measure of our Diligence, nor think we have not given ourselves Ease and Refreshment enough when *the Times of Refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord*, and we shall be assigned to, and take Possession of, an endless Rest and Happiness.

Thus should Men think of this Matter; And thus thinking they may reasonably be restrained from all Abuse of Pleasure and Recreation; And being reasonably restrain'd from this, it will be Easy and Plea-

pleasant to them to be so; for whatsoever is done with Reason is grateful and easy to humane Nature. And being regular and just in the Use of these Things, they may please God, promote their own Salvation, and procure to themselves the greater Glory and Reward hereafter, even by the Use of these; For when the just Use of Recreation and Pleasure promotes our Work and Duty, it does promote our Reward and future Happiness too. In this way then a Man will live the most pleasant and happy Life now, and will be always advancing towards endless and perfect Pleasure and Happiness to come. Which that we may do by the Guidance of Religion in all our Ways, God of his Infinite Mercy Grant through Jesus Christ; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all Honour and Glory World without End. *Amen.*

F I N I S.